

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 03069 271859Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8736

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 03069

EXDIS

FOR BUELL (EUR/NE)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJECT: CARDIFF - BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON GEORGE

THOMAS: POINTS FOR SECRETARY'S REPLY TO TOAST

1. GEORGE THOMAS, WHO WILL SHARE HONORS WITH FONSEC CALLAGHAN AT CARDIFF, IS CURRENTLY DEPUTY SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS. HE WAS BORN IN WALES AND STUDIED THERE UNTIL HE WENT TO THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON. HE TAUGHT SCHOOL UNTIL HE ENTERED PARLIAMENT AS A LABOR MEMBER IN 1945 FROM CARDIFF. THOMAS HAS SERVED IN THE CABINET AS PARLIAMENTARY UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE IN THE HOME OFFICE, MINISTER OF STATE FOR WALES AND MINISTER OF STATE, COMMONWEALTH OFFICE. THOMAS IS AN OUTSPOKEN OPPONENT OF THE WELSH NATIONALIST MOVEMENT. HE OWES HIS RISE IN THE LABOR PARTY TO HIS FAITHFUL AND UNCRITICAL SUPPORT OF PRIME MINISTER WILSON RATHER THAN TO HIS ABILITY. THOMAS IS A BACHELOR, A TEETOTALER AND A PROMINENT METHODIST LAY PREACHER. HE IS FRIENDLY AND DOES HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOR.

2. FOLLOWING ARE A FEW WELSH POINTS FOR REPLY SECRETARY IS EXPECTED TO MAKE TO LORD MAYOR'S TOAST:

(A) THE ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA TELLS ME THAT THE WELSH ARE FOND OF TALKING AND SINGING. I HAD THOUGHT OF TRYING TO LEARN A FEW WORDS OF GREETING IN

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WELSH BEFORE COMING TO CARDIFF, BUT I DECIDED YOU MIGHT

FIND IT DIFFICULT ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND MY TRANS-ATLANTIC ENGLISH. AS FOR SINGING, I AM AMONG EXPERTS AND I'LL LEAVE THAT TO GEORGE THOMAS.

(B) I AM ALSO TOLD THAT BEYOND TALKING AND SINGING, THE WELSH SPEND A GOOD DEAL OF TIME PLAYING AND WATCHING RUGBY. BUT I BELIEVE THAT IS MUCH TOO SERIOUS A SUBJECT TO BE TREATED BY A FOREIGNER.

(C) FROM MY OWN EXPERIENCE I CAN PARTICULARLY APPRECIATE THE GREAT HONOR THAT JIM CALLAGHAN MUST FEEL TODAY, SINCE I KNOW THAT HE IS AN IMMIGRANT TO WALES, HAVING COME UP TO CARDIFF ABOUT 1945.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LONDON03069
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750069-0810
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975027/aaaaagdp.tel
Line Count: 74
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <05 NOV 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CARDIFF - BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON GEORGE THOMAS: POINTS FOR SECRETARY'S REPLY TO TOAST
TAGS: OVIP, (KISSINGER, HENRY A)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006